

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



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NEWS RELEASE

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Councilmember Atkins Comes to Aid of City's Winter Shelter

District Three Councilmember Allocates 25K Toward Shortfall Mayor Murphy Councilmember Wear Frye and Peters Also Commit Funds to Keep Shelter Open

SAN DIEGO: When Third District City Councilmember Toni Atkins learned of a \$200,000 funding gap for the City's homeless programs, including a \$100,000 shortfall for the Winter Shelter, she immediately stepped up to the plate to commit funds to ensure that San Diego families would not be out on the streets this winter. Atkins has committed to allocate \$25,000 of District Three's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and in so doing, challenged her fellow councilmembers to follow her lead to fill the funding shortfall.

"This isn't just a funding gap, it's a human tragedy. To think of people being on the streets without shelter is heart-wrenching. In light of our already existing housing crisis, we can't afford to lose services," said Atkins. "While the relocated San Diego Family Shelter in Cortez Hill—which is scheduled to open later this year—will meet much of the demand for homeless families year-round, there will still be an overflow of families that need to be housed this winter. That's why it's imperative that we come through with these funds before the cold weather is upon us. This funding will help keep homeless families—even those that aren't served by the new shelter—out of the cold this winter."

The budget shortfall is primarily a result of the City not receiving two \$100,000 state grants which it had received annually in the past. When the City budget for the current fiscal year was prepared, \$100,000 of the anticipated grant funds were included for the Winter Shelter, and \$100,000 was earmarked for the year-round family transitional living shelter being constructed in Cortez Hill.

Councilmembers Byron Wear and Donna Frye both followed Atkins' lead and committed \$25,000 in CDBG funds, and First District Councilmember Scott Peters was able to come up with \$5,000. Mayor Murphy also came forward with \$25,000 to help wipe out the remaining shortfall for the Winter Shelter.

"I'm pleased that the five of us were able to pull together the funds to keep the Winter Shelter open," Atkins said. "We'll continue to do whatever we can to keep homeless families safe and warm during the winter."

"In light of the County's current budget woes, I'm hopeful they will be able to contribute the same level of operational services to back up the City's program. Given that there seem to be no real plans for winter shelters in North County, East County, or South Bay, this coming winter could be even more difficult for the City," said Atkins. "Due to this, we anticipate an increase in the number of homeless people coming into the City to seek shelter, and both the Winter Shelter and the Cortez Hill family shelter will be affected. We all need to step up to the plate to solve this problem."

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